
Development Services Department
Building Safety Division

BUILDING CODE DIRECTIVE #2

SUBJECT: FENCES AND FREE STANDING WALLS

A. Zoning Ordinance Requirements:

- 1) In all residential districts, the maximum height of any freestanding walls or fences in a required front yard setback shall be four (4) feet. In the areas behind the required front yard setback and in the required rear and side yards, the maximum height of such walls shall be eight (8) feet and when visible from a public street, school, park or common area, any such wall in excess of six (6) feet shall require approval of the Development Services Director.
- 2) The height of walls and fences shall be measured from the highest adjacent grade within twenty (20) feet, except when the wall or fence is adjacent to a street right-of-way which has a higher grade. For such situations, the height of the fence or wall shall be measured from the top of the curb or top of crown of road where no curb exists.

B. Building Code Requirements:

- 1) For permitting consideration, the height of walls and fences shall be measured from the lowest point of elevation of the finished surface of the ground, paving or sidewalk within five (5) feet of the wall or fence.
- 2) No permit or inspection is required for fences and freestanding walls six (6) feet or less in height.
- 3) Fences and free standing walls over six (6) feet in height shall be classified as Group U, Division 2 structures and shall comply with the structural requirements of Chapter 16 of the 1994 Uniform Building Code. Open fences (i.e. chain link, wrought iron, etc.) shall be designed in accordance with the same requirements as solid fences with an appropriate factor for percent of openness.

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(a) Wind Design:

1. Walls or fences twelve (12) feet or less in height shall be designed to withstand a 14.8 PSF horizontal pressure upon the gross area.
2. Walls or fences fifteen (15) feet or less but greater than twelve (12) feet shall be designed to withstand a 18.7 PSF horizontal pressure upon the gross area.

(b) Seismic Design: Uniform Building Code Section 1624

1. Design shall be based on $Z = 0.075$ criteria.
2. C_p for masonry and concrete fences shall be 0.75 with direction of force-applied normal to the flat surface of the wall. Uniform Building Code Table 16-O.

(c) Engineering drawings and calculations shall be submitted to the Department of Building Safety with an application for the building permit, site plan, and plan check fee.